



GRAY DAVIS, GOVERNOR

JULY 2002

MARIA CONTRERAS-SWEET, SECRETARY OF BUSINESS, TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING AGENCY

JEFF MORALES, DIRECTOR

DOUGLAS R. FAILING, DISTRICT 7 DIRECTOR



Inside Seven—a District 7 Edition of the CT News

DISTRICT 7 DIRECTOR ROBERT W. SASSAMAN RETIRES

Sassaman oversaw "...the most ambitious Construction program in the District's history."— Governor Gray Davis

By Jeanne Bonfilio

After a stellar 40-year career and amassing an endless list of impressive accomplishments, District 7 Director Robert W. Sassaman has retired. At the recent groundbreaking ceremony for the new District 7 Office Building, Governor Gray Davis announced Sassaman's pending departure and proclaimed May 30, 2002 "Robert W. Sassaman Day in California" commending him for "...40 years of exemplary service to the Department...and overseeing the most ambitious construction program in the District's history."

Sassaman said it's hard for him to believe it has really been 40 years since arriving from New Jersey, fresh out of college and starting a new career with Caltrans (then known as the California Division of Highways). During his summers in New Jersey between college semesters, he worked for the New Jersey Department of Highways and from this experience he knew what he wanted to do for his career. Therefore, shortly after graduating from Lafayette College in 1962, Sassaman started at Caltrans on the Junior Civil Engineering Program at a salary of \$562 per month.

His first assignment was in Construction on the Vincent Thomas Suspension Bridge. His second assignment was in Design Branch "A" where he worked on the portion of the Hollywood Freeway that is now Route



Governor Gray Davis, left, declares "Robert W. Sassaman Day in California" as he presents Sassaman with a special certificate and announces his upcoming retirement at the new District Office Building groundbreaking ceremony last May.

170. He then worked in Materials for a brief time and then was assigned back to Design Branch "A" and as an Assistant Highway Engineer was given the assignment to design the I-405/118 Interchange, which he is still very proud of today.

In 1966, Sassaman was promoted to Associate Highway Engineer and supervised the completion of design of the I-405/118 Interchange. Then, in 1972, he took on an assignment giving him further opportunities to incorporate Project Management into the Design function. What followed was an assignment to the Programs and Budgets

Branch where he prepared the first State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the first Federal TIP. He also started the unit that now has become Project Management.

In 1978, Sassaman was promoted to Staff Services Manager II over Project Management. Soon thereafter he accepted a Senior Transportation Engineer position as Chief of Hydraulics. Then, in 1982 Sassaman was promoted to Chief of Project Management; and then promoted in 1984 to Staff Services Manager III to manage the new

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The Director's Chair column will resume in the August, 2002 issue of Inside Seven.

Dear Caltrans:

I would like to thank Greg Farr, Denis Katayama, Greg Damico, Ashraf Habbak and Jagdish Patel for revising plans for work on I-5 in the Valencia area. I am mindful of the considerations, which necessitated the possible closure of the Rye Canon on-ramp in the first place. Therefore, I am all the more appreciative of the work you accomplished in the revisions to the plans allowing the ramp to remain open. It has been productive working with your department and I look forward to future collaborations.

Sincerely,

George Runner, Assemblyman, 36th District

Dear Michael Miles, Deputy District Director, Maintenance:

This letter is to extend my sincere thanks to one of your Maintenance personnel who was traveling on Route 60 this morning. I had a flat tire and was awaiting assistance on the right shoulder. At that time a Caltrans vehicle pulled up behind me and inquired if I had called for assistance. I explained that I had and was awaiting assistance. He stated that the area where I pulled over was a high-traffic area where many 18-wheelers zoom by. Out of his concern for my safety he offered to change my tire and help me merge back in to the flow of traffic. After he helped me change the tire, he wished me a safe trip. His sincerity and assistance at a desperate time was very much appreciated. It isn't often that someone goes out of his or her way to help, especially on the freeway, and I feel this gesture should not go unnoticed. This letter is to give my deepest and sincere thanks. He made my day a little brighter despite the inconvenience I encountered. You should be very proud to have an employee who is willing to assist others in times of need, especially when it is done voluntarily.

Sincerely,

DiAnna Villanueva, City of Angels Medical Center

Dear Caltrans:

I live in Simi Valley and I would like to commend Caltrans on the fine job they have done on the Simi Valley Freeway (118) resurfacing project. During the entire project, I have never seen a major tie-up due to the construction. In fact, it is very seldom that I see any actual construction being done. Everything just seems to magically appear. Congratulations and thank you!

Jay Hansen, Simi Valley



Dear Lan Saadatnejadi, Office Chief:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Los Angeles County Fair Association, I want

to thank you and your entire staff for all of your efforts on the completion of the Garey Avenue construction overpass. We have come to expect great teamwork and cooperation from the folks at Caltrans with the support of Rose Casey, and now with your support, it has been a pleasure working through the many challenges that the I-10 project has presented.

Dale Coleman, Vice President, Sales and Marketing
General Manager Convention and Exposition Los Angeles County Fair

Dear Ms. Suzie Torres, Special Programs Coordinator:

What a pleasant surprise to receive your nice letter with copies of your *Inside Seven* newsletter. I was thrilled to read the article and I really appreciate all the nice things you said about our school. I copied the article and photo for those students who were in it and sent it home to their parents. Of course, I sent a copy of the booklet to Rosie Diaz, our Career Day Coordinator. She will be thrilled. Thank you again, dear Suzie. We really enjoyed having you and Lupe Tamayo with us. May God bless you both and all the Caltrans workers who do so much, which is taken for granted by many. May we all be safe and blessed in these troubled times. We hope to see you at our next Career Day.

Sincerely in Christ,

Sister Ena Maguire, SJC, Principal, Saint Peter and Paul School

Dear Ms. Suzie Torres, Special Programs Coordinator:

We want to thank you and your staff for a very, very important role in our Career Day. You and your staff made it possible for the Children of Saint Peter and Paul Elementary School to see some real-life jobs and careers. Linda Alex-Woods came through in making sure Caltrans was well represented. In fact I talked to many individuals at your office as Lupe Tamayo, Kinikki Gordon, Johnny Clark and Renalfo Meza. They all did a more-than-fantastic job representing Caltrans. Caltrans' contributions may well be immeasurable! May God bless all of you.

With Sincere Appreciation,
Rose Diaz, Career Day Coordinator
Saint Peter and Paul School

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GROUNDBREAKING KICKS OFF LARGEST VENTURA COUNTY HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

By Ivy Estrada

The Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) recently hosted a groundbreaking ceremony, complete with gold-painted shovels, to celebrate the long-anticipated start of construction on the Vineyard to Johnson improvement project on the Ventura Freeway (101). Elected officials, representatives from state and federal environmental agencies and Caltrans' team of engineers and Construction, management and Maintenance staff joined VCTC for the celebration.

Ginger Gherardi, VCTC Executive Director was Mistress of Ceremonies introducing guests who spoke of happy recollections of teamwork, careful planning, persistence and patience that made this, the largest highway improvement project on the oldest and busiest freeway in Ventura County, possible.

"This highway is a lifeline facility for the region," said California Transportation Commissioner Allen Lawrence. More than 140,000 vehicles travel this segment of Route 101 each day and by the year 2020, this number will increase by 41,000 vehicles.

The project will widen Route 101 from six lanes to eight lanes between Vineyard Avenue and Ventura Road, and from six lanes to 12 lanes between Ventura Road and Johnson Drive; will improve traffic flow by an estimated 15 miles per hour; replace the existing northbound and southbound bridges (Santa Clara River Bridge) with a single, 12-lane bridge; reconstruct the Ventura Road undercrossing and combine it with the new Santa Clara River Bridge; construct auxiliary lanes that will provide on-and-off access for motorists traveling in the local area; provide bike lanes across the bridge; and construct the new Oxnard Boulevard Interchange.

Deborah Robertson, Caltrans Deputy District Director of External



Breaking ground for Ventura Freeway (101) interchange. Left to right front row with shovels: Port Hueneme Councilman Robert Turner; Ventura County Supervisor John Flynn; San Buenaventura Mayor Ray Di Giulio; Ventura County Supervisor and Ventura County Transportation Commission Chair Kathy Long; Oxnard Mayor Manual Lopez; and California Transportation Commissioner Allen Lawrence. Back row, left to right: Ventura County Supervisor Steve Bennett; San Buenaventura Councilman Neal Andrews; San Buenaventura Councilman Brian Brennan; and Port Hueneme Councilman Jon Sharkey.

Affairs said, "In addition to the commitment to provide a safe and efficient transportation system, Caltrans strives to provide aesthetic and environmental improvements that reflect community values." An example of this is the median barrier project under construction just north of the Vineyard to Johnson Project on Route 101 where the new construction will help to protect the placement of oleanders, as was requested by the city of Ventura. Also, this median captures the structural theme already present in the community by replicating the terra-cotta brick design that is found in the historic Mission San Buenaventura. The brick design with cobalt blue splashes symbolizing the

ocean will also be incorporated into the Vineyard to Johnson project at Johnson Drive.

Additional speakers included Oxnard Mayor Manuel Lopez; Ventura Mayor Ray Di Giulio; Kathy Long, Ventura County Supervisor and VCTC Chair; and Ventura County Supervisor John Flynn.

Other guests included: Port Hueneme Mayor Tony Volante; Ventura County Supervisor Steve Bennett; Ventura City Council members Neal Andrews, Sandy Smith, Brian Brennan and Carl Morehouse; Donna Landeros, Ventura City Manager; Oxnard City Councilmember Dean Mulhardt; Ed

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Bob Sassaman

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Management Services Branch. And in 1986, he promoted again to Deputy District Director for Administration.

In 1988, Sassaman accepted the new Deputy of Project Management position in District 8 in San Bernardino. It was during this time that the Route 30/330 Interchange was constructed, a \$50-million project that had "zero" claims. And he also worked on the last section of Route 215 through March Air Force Base that included the first "urban interchange" in California. The ultimate satisfaction for him was seeing the Route 30 Freeway finally come to life, and now the completion of construction is near.

In 1995, Sassaman returned to District 7 as the Chief Deputy District Director. In 1999 he was again promoted, this time to the District Director position. He served in this position until his retirement and says he is very proud of all the accomplishments that have taken place under his direction. He is also quite pleased that the new District 7 Office Building is under construction after having spearheaded the effort in 1987.

Tony V. Harris, Chief Deputy, was Master of Ceremonies at Sassaman's recent retirement luncheon. Some 400 well-wish-

ers and dignitaries joined Sassaman and his family at the New Otani Hotel in Los Angeles to bid him a fond farewell. Presentations included the following:

- Senator Jack O'Connell and representatives for Senator Sheila Kuehl, Senator Bob Margett and Assemblyman Robert Pacheco, presented resolutions commending Sassaman for his "...lifetime of public service to the State of California."
- John Fasana, Chairman, Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) recognized Sassaman for his "service to Caltrans," saying "I've seen a tremendous change in Caltrans in the last several years... We have seen a much closer working relationship under Bob. It's really been tremendous to see our staffs work together to accomplish all the infrastructure improvements projects we need."
- Los Angeles Councilman Hal Bernson presented a certificate on behalf of the City. He said, "Bob has been terrific to work with; not just from the City's point of view, but he also served on the Board for Metrolink and the Southern California Regional Rail Authority. There has never been a time that I've come with a problem to Bob that he hasn't been helpful and tried his best to work out a solution for us."
- Deborah O'Connor, Mayor Pro-Tem from the City of Diamond Bar, expressed the city's appreciation and said an award will be presented at a forthcoming city council meeting.
- Paul Hubler, representing Congressman Adam Schiff's office, read a statement from the Congressional Record, commemorating Sassaman's lengthy list of achievements over a "truly remarkable career at Caltrans." He added, "I am proud to say that to this day, Congressman Schiff still cites that the fastest response by a State agency, ever, is from Caltrans... That was Caltrans under Bob Sassaman."
- The City of Burbank's Public Works Director, Bruce Feng, presented a certificate thanking Sassaman for the excellent service and having "never left us off your radar screen."
- Chief Mike Brown, California Highway Patrol (CHP) said, "I have had the privilege of working with Caltrans all throughout my career, as far south as San Diego and as far north as Oregon. And the Caltrans team in Los Angeles, in District 7, has been the best experience I've ever had in my professional career — and that's a reflection of your leadership, Bob Sassaman." He then presented the highest award possible from the CHP, a resolution from Commissioner Spike Helmick.
- Mark Pisano, Southern California Association of Governments, said, "What needs to be recognized is Bob's leadership in re-instituting a transportation board to move improvement projects forward. Bob it's your leadership that we all here today want to celebrate."
- Ginger Gherardi, Ventura County Transportation Authority, thanked Sassaman, and said he will be missed very much. She said, "Bob always takes great pride in the community." A plaque of appreciation was also presented.



Chief Deputy Tony V. Harris, left, traveled from Sacramento to present Robert W. Sassaman with a plaque at his retirement celebration at the New Otani Hotel in Los Angeles last June.

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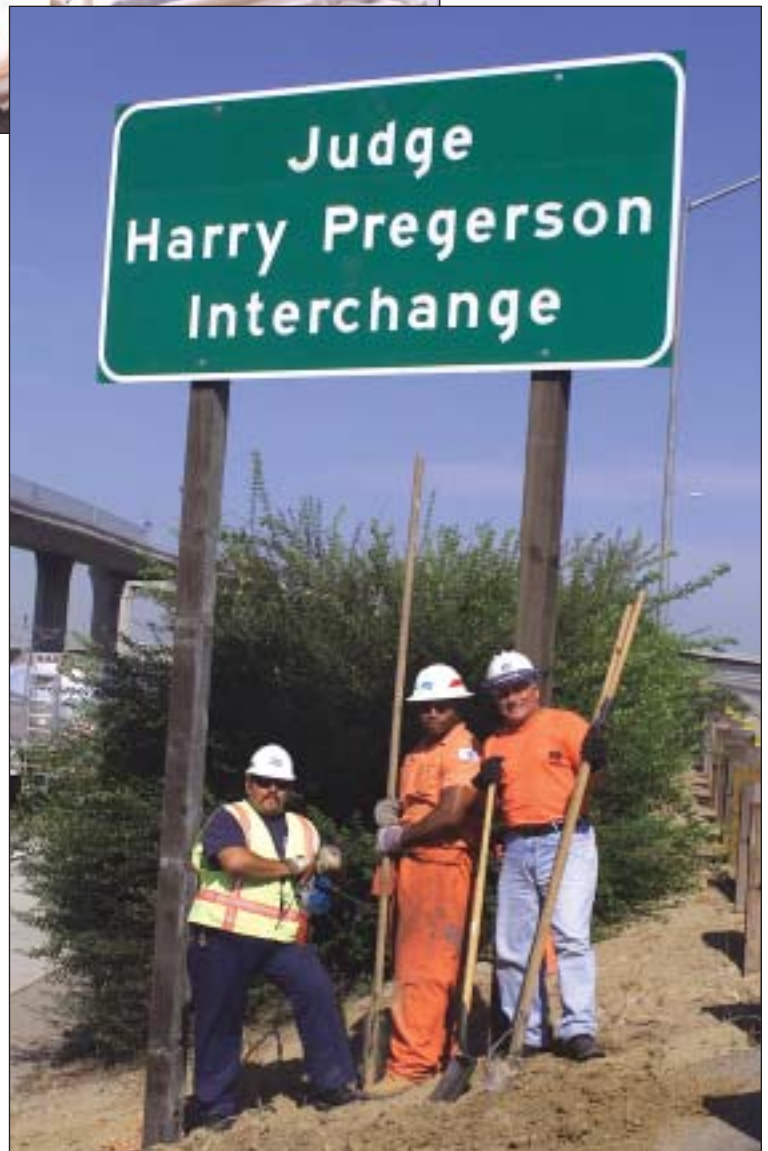
Maria Contreras-Sweet, Secretary, Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, joins Judge Harry Pregerson, center, and Assembly Speaker-Emeritus Robert M. Hertzberg at a sign installation ceremony honoring the esteemed judge.

Judge Harry Pregerson Honored

A long-time Los Angeles advocate for the homeless and long regarded as a champion of community service, Judge Harry Pregerson, United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, was honored recently when the I-105/I-110 Interchange was named in his honor.

Judge Pregerson was first appointed to the Federal bench by President Lyndon B. Johnson and was appointed to the U. S. Court of Appeals 9th Circuit by President Jimmy Carter in 1979. Born in Los Angeles in 1923, and the oldest active judge in the circuit, Judge Pregerson has led numerous efforts to create organizations that provide housing, employment and rehabilitation services, including the Century Freeway Housing Program.

At the recent sign installation ceremony, Judge Pregerson was joined by members of the community as well as elected officials including Robert M. Hertzberg, Assembly Speaker-Emeritus and Maria Contreras-Sweet, Secretary, Business Transportation and Housing Agency. •



Members of the special Sign Crew install the new Judge Harry Pregerson Interchange sign on the I-105 Freeway at the I-110 Interchange. Left to right: Mario Corleone, Maintenance Worker; Brian Dickerson, Maintenance Worker; and Raul Caban, Equipment Operator II.

Bob Sassaman

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- Brian Humphrey, representing the City of Los Angeles Fire Department said, "Thank you Bob, on behalf of the many men and women of the Los Angeles Fire Department. You have taken leadership and shown an uncommon responsibility and a concern for safety."
- Caltrans' Art Salazar and Sa'ad Issa, representing Professional Engineers in California Government (PECG), presented Sassaman with plaque for his "many years of professional service, for caring about employees and for his many contributions to PECG."
- Representing the Los Angeles Department of Transportation was James Ozaki. Ozaki said, "Caltrans has a great tradition of building fabulous transportation projects and a wonderful freeway system that is world renowned. They also have an excellent tradition of developing leadership and Bob Sassaman is no exception." Sassaman was then presented with a Los Angeles city street sign which read, "2002 Robert W. Sassaman Street."
- On behalf of Caltrans' Quarter Century Club, Tom Almany, presented Sassaman with a souvenir shovel and hardhat. "On behalf of the Quarter Century Club, we will miss your speeches at our holiday luncheons each year," said Almany. "Thank you for the support you always show the Quarter Century Club."
- Chief Deputy, Tony V. Harris added, "I would like to pass along congratulations from Caltrans Director Jeff Morales and thank you for the great work that you have done. Bob has been very valuable during Jeff Morales' tenure. He is a person who demonstrates great leadership to help us stay focused."
- Secretary of State Bill Jones also presented a special certificate and said, "This is for 40 years of great state service to the people of California. We want to thank you for that."
- Bob Dennis, Deputy District Director for Administration, expressed his sentiments to Sassaman, saying, "I'm not just losing a great boss, but I'm losing an ally, a friend. The thing that stands out most in my mind about Mr. Sassaman is he is just a flat, plain, good man and has a lot of integrity as a person. He's been a pleasure to work with."
- Deputy District Directors Mike Miles and Frank Quon presented Sassaman with a souvenir freeway sign and a humorous "freestanding" shovel and comical cell phone; and they both thanked him for his leadership.
- Doug Failing, Chief Deputy, said that Sassaman possesses a series of core values. "The first of them is integrity," Failing said, "and it drives the way we are the organization that we are. He's brought stability, he's brought focus and he's brought a higher order of thinking...It's something we will carry with us wherever we go and it's a part of the team that we are."

Sassaman then addressed the audience and shared fond memories. "I fell in love with this place and here I am 40

years later," he remembered. He credits his success to strong family support from his parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles. His parents, both teachers, "...prepared the path and taught me the importance of studies, of respect, consideration for others, caring for the environment and that I could accomplish anything I put my mind to."

Looking back, Sassaman added that his past supervisors at Caltrans over the years have provided a lot of informal mentoring. He especially thanked retiree Al Mayfield for his support. "And my peers," he said, "have provided an awful lot of friendship and assistance; I don't know what I would have done, especially in the early part of my career, without that help."

Sassaman concluded by expressing his appreciation to Headquarters Staff and also to the District Deputies, past and present. "I would match our current Executive Team with anyone's in the state," he said. "This District 7 team is known world-wide as renowned leaders in transportation, and I thank each one of them. And my thanks also to District 8 for seven thoroughly enjoyable years; the CHP, our good partners and especially to Chief Mike Brown and Assistant Chiefs; to all our other sister agencies and elected officials represented here today; and the great staff at Caltrans — we are all working together to make this a better era for transportation."

Sassaman is the proud father of children Sunny, Carrie and Rob. And when he and wife Nancy were married nine years ago, he became equally proud of step-children Valerie, Cindy and Joe. His many hobbies include winemaking (he won a Silver Medal at the Los Angeles County Fair — and will be receiving four additional medals at this year's fair — one gold and three bronze), woodworking, gardening, photography, fishing, backpacking (he has completed the Muir Trail from Yosemite to Mount Whitney), genealogy, handyman and spending quality time with his children and grandchildren. Caltrans sends its heartfelt thanks and its very best wishes to Robert W. Sassaman — for a long, happy and fulfilling retirement. •

Obituaries

Caltrans is saddened at the recent passing of the following employees and retirees:

- Richard Giurino**, *Maintenance Worker, 30 years of state service*
- Thomas Gracia**, *Maintenance Equipment Operator, 30 years of state service*
- Bob Hallett**, *Maintenance Equipment Operator, 10 years of state service*
- Tom Kilday**, *District Sign Coordinator, 39 years of state service*
- Jackie James**, *Transportation Engineer, Civil, 21 years of state service*
- Doreen Najera**, *Service Assistant, Maintenance, 12 years of state service*
- David R. Reed**, *Retired Senior Right of Way Agent, retired 1984*
- Richard Salter**, *Maintenance Equipment Operator, 32 years of state service*
- Christine Tripp**, *Associate Caltrans Administrator, 11 years of state service*

Our most sincere condolences and thoughts go out to the families of these employees and retirees who will be missed by all.



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Dear Jeanne Bonfilio, Public Information Officer:

On behalf of the Valencia Industrial Association and three hundred members, we are writing to express our deep appreciation to you and the Caltrans engineering staff, Greg Farr, Denis Katayama, Jagdish Patel, Ashraf Habbak and Greg Damico, for the very responsible assistance you have given the merchants along The Old Road in the Santa Clarita area. First of all, you listened... You and the Caltrans engineering staff made a sincere effort to investigate concerns. Both time and energy were spent in a thoughtful and safety-conscious manner to respond to the businesspersons' requests. Over a series of meetings which transpired in a short period of time, solutions were found to basically address all the major issues. Thank you, thank you! In an era where it is easy to become cynical about the methods used by major organizations, you have demonstrated that the California Department of Transportation is flexible and will tailor a response to the concerns of the businessperson. For your prompt attention to this and for finding a solution that will work, we salute you!

B. J. Atkins, President
Kathy Norris, Executive Director
Connie Worden-Roberts,
Transportation Chairman
Valencia Industrial Association

Dear Ted Jemelian, Maintenance, Cerritos Landscape Crew #2:

I just want to take the time to say "thank you" to you and the Cerritos Landscape Maintenance Crew #2. I know it is your job, but it is always nice

to get a pat on the back. Your crew is very nice and respectful. I appreciate the time frame the work was done. Things were taken care of and once again, the work you did makes the whole neighborhood look 100% better. Thank you!

Sally Munshaur, Downey

Dear Mrs. Kirsten Stahl,

Thanks for taking the time to reply to my inquiry. You have given me some excellent information I can follow up on. And I must confess to being pleasantly surprised by your thorough response. I am used to being barely tolerated and mostly ignored by the state government people in the state where I live.

Best Regards,
Kent Barrus, Convergent Concrete

Dear Mr. Cleve Govan, Environmental Planning:

I take great pleasure in writing this letter to thank you for your expertise and for the time you spent with me and my class recently, giving us an excellent guided tour of the Route 710 freeway "missing link" corridor. I also thank you on behalf of the PACE Program and West Los Angeles College. As you noticed, the students were excited from the moment of the first stop to the very end. Although by that time there were visible signs of them being hot and tired, they were never bored. Your enthusiastic account of the struggle to build the freeway; the historical sites which will be saved or restored... opened the students' eyes and thoughts to a situation that some did not know existed — and others had known of but had never understood the dynamics that were involved.... The vivid memories which you helped to create will also go a long way to help them put together very good reports. Some have said this was one trip they will never forget and that they will be able to tell

their children and grandchildren about, especially after the freeway is completed. My sincere thanks, once again, for your kind help in making this project an exercise in academic success.

Sincerely,
Maudelyn Johnson, Weekend College and PACE Director
West Los Angeles College

Dear Mr. Ted Jemelian, Maintenance, Cerritos Landscape Crew #2:

On behalf of all the neighbors from this corner of Santa Fe Springs on the north side of I-5, we wish to thank you and Caltrans very much for the excellent and hard work done along the freeway. It looks clean and nice. So please thank Mario and all the workers who came over this morning, and especially you, Mr. Jemelian.

Alfonso Cacho, Santa Fe Springs

Ventura County

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Sotelo, Oxnard City Manager; Councilman and former Port Hueneme Mayor Robert Turner; Councilman Jon Sharkey; Jeremy Tittle, who represented Congresswoman Lois Capps; Brian Miller who represented Congressman Elton Gallegly; and Sherri Sepulveda, representing Senator Jack O'Connell. Project funding comes from federal, state and local agencies. The city of Ventura, an active partner through the project design stages, served on the project development team. Through the VCTC, the City of Oxnard totally funds the Route 1/101 Interchange improvements. MCM and Security Paving of North Highlands, California are joint contractors on this construction project that is estimated to complete in the fall of 2006.

Congratulations to all who worked to get this project "on the road" and a special "thank-you" to Mark Wareham of River Park Company for providing the delicious array of refreshments. •

What's Cookin' At *Caltrans*

SUMMER VEGETABLE SALAD

From *Bon Appetit Magazine*

- 2 small zucchini, cut into 1/4-inch slices
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 yellow summer squash, cut into 1/4-inch slices
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano, crumbled
- 8 ounces mushrooms, quartered
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 12 cherry tomatoes, stemmed, halved
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar

Steam zucchini and squash until just tender (about 6 minutes). Drain. Transfer to bowl. Add mushrooms and tomatoes. Combine mustard and vinegar in separate bowl. Gradually whisk in oil. Add oregano and cumin. Mix dressing into vegetables. Season with salt and pepper. Cool to room temperature and serve.

SUMMER VEGETABLE STEW

From *Gourmet Magazine*

- 1 onion, chopped fine
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 cup fresh corn kernels (about 2 ears)
- 2 tomatoes cut into 1/2-inch dice
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 medium zucchini, rinsed and cut into 1/2-inch dice
- 1 medium yellow squash, rinsed and cut into 1/2-inch dice (about 1-1/2 cups)
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh oregano leaves or 1/2 teaspoon dried, crumbled
- 1/2 cup packed fresh basil leaves, shredded

In a large skillet cook onion and garlic in oil over low heat, stirring, until the onion is softened. Add zucchini, squash, bell pepper and corn and cook mixture over moderate heat, stirring, for 4 minutes. Add tomatoes, oregano, salt and pepper to taste and simmer covered, stirring occasionally for 10 minutes. Simmer uncovered, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes more, or until the excess liquid is evaporated. Sprinkle with basil and serve it warm or at room temperature.



IS PUBLISHED BY THE
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DISTRICT 7 • EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DIVISION
120 SOUTH SPRING STREET • ROOM 100
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
(213) 897-4867 • FAX (213) 897-3836
<http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist07/>

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